Community Contact

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

September/
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2008

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Finding Opportunities in Problems

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Grand Chief Dr. Sydney Garrioch (in the checkered shirt) with students from Nelson House who were part of a pilot program that brought them into Thompson to receive training and work with local businesses this past summer.

Manitoba

This Issue

Welcome to the September/ October 2008 *Community Contact* newsletter.

The theme for this issue of *Community Contact* is public works. Fall is the time for all communities to be involved in making sure their buildings and equipment are ready for the cooler weather that is sure to come. In this issue, we look at the roles and responsibilities of the public works employee and the importance of community infrastructure audits. Following the recommendations outlined in these audits helps communities maintain their buildings and provide for the safety of employees and residents. The public works employee plays a vital role in maintaining and providing council with information on the state of community infrastructure and equipment.

Our feature article looks at an innovative commuter pilot project designed to address labour shortages in the city of Thompson and to ease unemployment in several neighbouring communities. The pilot project enabled students from the nearby communities of Wabowden, Nelson House and Split Lake to travel to Thompson for training and job placement with participating businesses during the summer months of July and August.

Along with these articles, we provide information on the volunteer fire fighter insurance program and the newly established Aboriginal and Northern Affairs toll-free emergency number. We also feature a brief recap of the 38th Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC) Annual General Meeting and Community Support Forum. Finally, we've included a municipal calendar monthly reminder for October/ November.

Enjoy this issue and please feel free to contact us with your comments, pictures and article suggestions, or to request additional copies.

Finding Oppor

The Summer Students

As economic development expands in Manitoba's north, the City of Thompson is experiencing a labour shortage. Local businesses ask: Where will we find more labour? In contrast, some of the communities surrounding Thompson are experiencing population increases and want to know: Where will all these people work?

The Summer Students Employment Commuter Pilot Project is helping find one answer to both questions. The pilot project was aimed at proving to Thompson and nearby communities that Northern Manitoba has the human resource potential to fulfill its employment needs. It provided employers with a new source of potential employees by addressing issues like affordable and reliable commuter transportation, training and meaningful jobs for the students involved.

The pilot project's initial goal was to help youth commute from the surrounding communities of Wabowden, Nelson House and Split Lake to Thompson for jobs at local businesses. To prepare them for the working world, students were required to attend a five day pre-employment skill training session. They were taught essential skills in the following areas:

- resume writing
- interview skills
- money management
- on the job conduct

The youth were also given lessons in personal and leadership development. An added goal was to engage communities in doing something different to address youth needs.

The pilot project began in July with eight students participating. They were provided with transportation between their communities and Thompson for training and work experiences with participating Thompson employers including:

- Canadian Tire
- Extra Foods
- Illios
- Tim Hortons
- A&W
- Princeton Towers

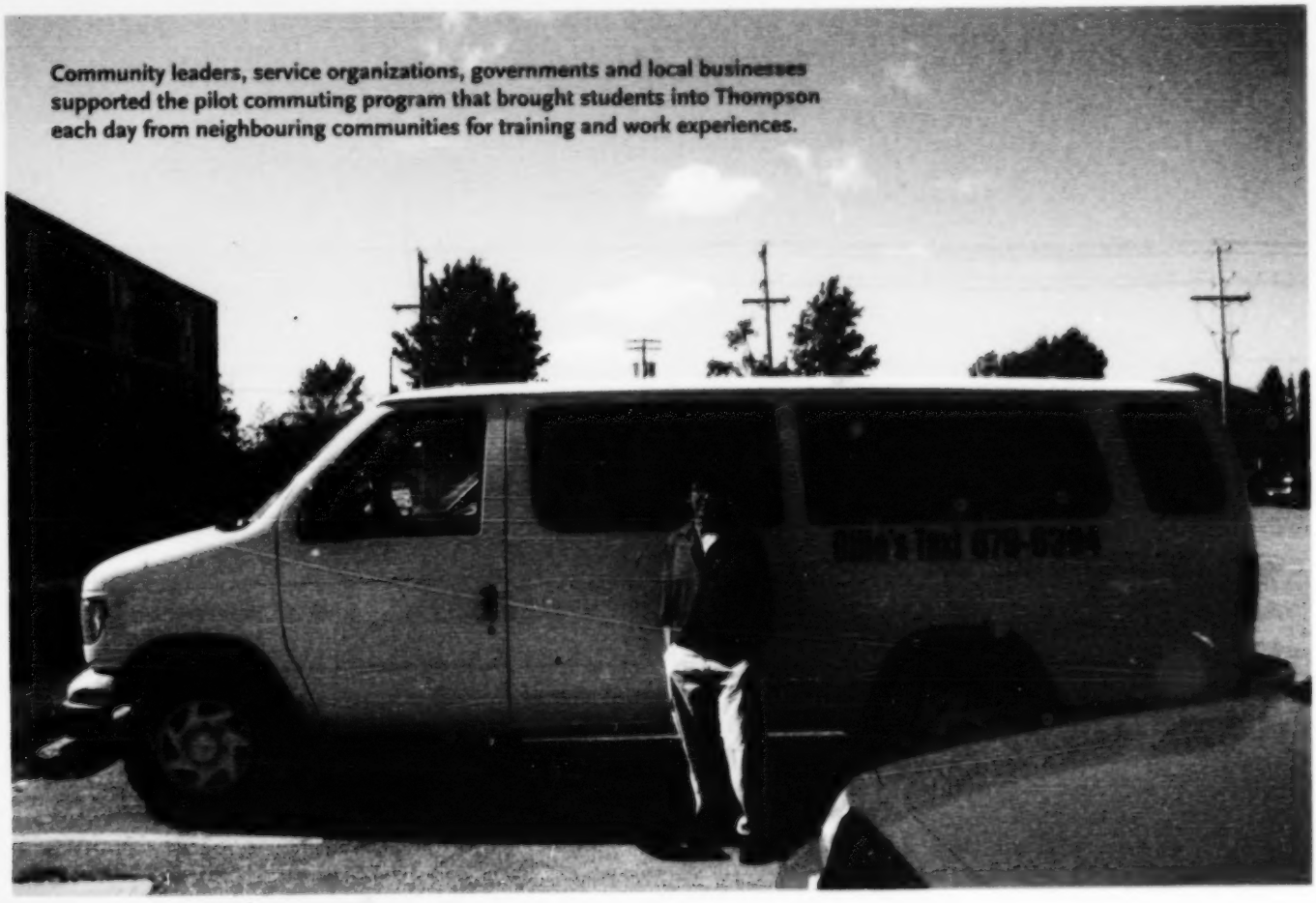
tunities in Problems

Employment Commuter Pilot Project

Because experience with long-distance commuting arrangements is not common in Northern Manitoba, the project was a learning experience for both employers and students. In particular, students learned about keeping employers informed about their availability and about the personal discipline it takes to be ready on time for a bus ride of an hour or more each way to and from Thompson.

The pilot project wrapped up at the end of August with a banquet to show appreciation for the students who participated. Thompson Mayor Tim Johnston, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Grand Chief Dr. Sydney Garrioch and Tataskweyak Cree Nation Chief Emile Garson all voiced their approval of the project and encouraged its continuation. Student participants were congratulated for their help in blazing a trail for future Northern Manitoba commuter projects. "Commuting for work in Northern Manitoba is a reality that cannot be ignored," said Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) community development consultant Charles Nyabeze.

Project support came from neighbouring communities, service organizations and participating businesses. Financial contributions were from Vale INCO Limited, MB4Youth and the Aboriginal Economic Resource Development Fund (AERD). For more information, call the project co-ordinators Charles Nyabeze of ANA at 204-677-6787 or Freda Lepine of MKO at 204-677-1620.



Community leaders, service organizations, governments and local businesses supported the pilot commuting program that brought students into Thompson each day from neighbouring communities for training and work experiences.

The Annual Infrastructure Audit: *Is Your Community Ready?*

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) and Energy Consultants International, an independent third party, perform annual audits of maintenance procedures to make sure communities have spent money properly and effectively. A letter grade is decided and the results are compared to other ANA communities and industry standards. In 2008, community audits are being performed for the ninth year in many Northern Affairs communities.

Instead of trying to find and describe all items requiring maintenance, auditors only report the overall level of maintenance. The audit reports give users a sense of whether adequate maintenance is being carried out in an organized and cost effective manner. Communities should also use audit reports as checklists to ensure deficiencies are addressed before the next audit.

Maintenance Management Systems (MMS)

Communities using an MMS generally score much higher on their benchmark ratings. Their maintenance budgets also cover expenses easily, allowing for further community improvements. The five-year plans developed by communities that use an MMS are more comprehensive and detailed because better information flows from the public works employee (PWE) to council. MMS monthly reports provide an excellent method of written communication from the PWE to council and this recorded communication helps councils prepare accurate five-year maintenance and capital plan budgets.

Five-year maintenance and capital plans are reviewed by auditors who note differences between activities planned and actual conditions encountered. Usually, these differences indicate maintenance not performed as planned. This may indicate the community is falling behind in its maintenance effort and show that closer attention is required.

Water Supply Systems

General maintenance is observed and includes plant cleanliness, equipment condition and water production records.

Fire Protection Systems

Fire protection systems are given high priority because they help protect human life, alert fire departments and protect community infrastructure and services. Audited items include alarm

Maintenance audits make sure a community is aware of problems that might worsen if not given attention. In this case, a building is in immediate need of painting to prevent further deterioration.

A well equipped and neatly organized storage area for personal protection equipment sets an example that all communities should try to match.

In this case, a detailed maintenance audit might have saved a life when it called attention to a missing electrical panel cover that left high voltage wires exposed, creating an accidental shock hazard.

systems, fire extinguishers, power fail lights, exit lights and fire fighting equipment.

Buildings

Buildings are audited to ensure occupant safety, protection of the asset from outside elements and aesthetic qualities. Safety items include emergency power fail lighting and exit lights, fire extinguishers, fire detection and alarm systems, first aid kits and electrical cover plates. Exterior roofing, walls, windows and doors are checked for openings, cracks, caulking and weather stripping.

Wastewater Systems

Wastewater treatment facilities must have secured access hatches for trash pits and trunk dump pits. Lagoon fences should be in good repair and brushing should be done to remove cattails and other vegetation.

Solid Waste Disposal

Solid waste disposal sites must have fenced and gated compounds. Waste and recycling depots must have adequate signs and need to be staffed when open.

Roads

Community road systems are checked for adequate signs, fallen trees, potholes, brushing, ditching and traffic gravel.

Vehicles

Vehicle log books are a basic building block of an organized maintenance management system. All vehicles, including fire trucks, tractors and public works trucks, must have and use maintenance log books to track everything including, regular oil changes, fuel consumption and major repairs.

Workplace Health and Safety (WSH)

Items audited include bulletin boards with required WSH information, building evacuation and layout plans, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, eyewash stations and personal protective equipment.

The Many Duties and Responsibilities of a Public Works Employee

A community public works employee (PWE) is often the go-to person when there is a problem with a piece of equipment, something is broken or something needs replacing. Communities rely on the PWE to keep things in working order and properly maintain community infrastructure and other assets. But the duties and responsibilities of the PWE often go beyond general maintenance and repair.

PWEs and other community employees are often asked to do tasks that are not part of their normal job functions. It's a common occurrence in many communities because there are often more tasks than employees to do the work. But it is also important to note that there are specific tasks that each employee must perform as part of their everyday duties, if their communities are going to run effectively and efficiently. Knowing what these duties are helps to keep the employees focused on completing the necessary tasks that are most vital to community operations.

PWEs are responsible for completing tasks in the following areas as outlined in the job description from the Employee Management Guide:

- caretaking and general maintenance of community buildings
- garbage collection where service exists
- equipment and vehicle maintenance
- general maintenance of community parks, rinks and playgrounds
- review and report on road and other community infrastructure
- cleanup and maintenance of community cemetery, if applicable

With implementation of Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) requirements in communities, the PWE is also responsible for the following:

- protecting the safety and health of self and others affected by work
- wearing personal protective equipment required to perform various tasks
- making sure vehicles and workstations have the necessary safety equipment
- informing others and community council of unsafe equipment or work areas
- participating in all applicable safety training
- providing written reports to council on findings from infrastructure audits and WSH inspections

Through all these tasks, the PWE should keep a written log of problems or items that require attention. The PWE will need to provide council with the results of infrastructure audits and a written report on problems or issues that need to be addressed so that council can authorize purchasing parts or equipment needed for repairs or replacements.

New Insurance Program for V

The new Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) volunteer fire fighter insurance program was announced in the July/August Community Contact newsletter and at the 38th NACC Annual General Meeting and Support Forum. As of July 15, 2008, all ANA community volunteer fire fighters are registered and will now receive basic loss of life, accident and sickness benefits while on duty or participating in training. ANA provides this insurance at no cost to the community or volunteer fire fighter through the Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services (VFIS).

ANA is also developing plans for extended 24-hour coverage that will protect volunteers off duty as well as on duty. This extended insurance will be for fire fighters who have participated in Level 1 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 training and for active community fire departments that train on a monthly basis. Communities will be asked to provide a list of their volunteer fire fighters and records of training, and these will need to be submitted to ANA monthly. Without proper membership and training records, volunteer fire fighters may not be eligible for extended 24-hour insurance coverage.

An information package will be sent to communities outlining the coverage and eligibility requirements along with any necessary forms. Listed below is the claim process if an injury or illness occurs to an ANA community volunteer fire fighter.

Volunteers make up the vast majority of fire fighters in ANA communities. Life, accident and sickness insurance is now available free of charge to active volunteer fire department members who have received proper training.

Information required to process VFIS claims

If 24 hour or off-duty claim:

- copy of T4 or paystub as proof of income
- copy of disability receipt received from Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) to determine the benefit amount after the first four weeks, copy of disability cheque and/or copy of the employer's disability plan payment
- completion of both claim forms
- there is a 15-day waiting period — payment begins on day 16

If on-duty claim:

- copy of T4 or paystub as proof of income
- copy of disability receipt received from WCB to determine the benefit amount after the first four weeks
- completion of both claim forms

Additional information for VFIS claimants

1) For approved claims VFIS will pay $300/wk for the first 28 days of coverage. After the first 28 days they will pay up to $900/wk for the employed firefighter and a flat $75/wk for the unemployed firefighter.

2) If the WCB approves the claim, VFIS will continue to top up the benefit up to 100 percent of the firefighters gross weekly wage.

3) If the WCB does not approve benefits, it does not mean VFIS will also disallow them. VFIS specializes in coverage for firefighters and has approved claims that WCB has not allowed. If a firefighter is on claim and WCB deems the person fit to return to work, VFIS coverage will not necessarily stop at the same time.

4) VFIS will cover a wider range of activities than WCB including contests, conventions and travel to and from these events.

5) VFIS will also provide lump sum payment for burns, HIV, accidental death, accidental dismemberment and physical impairment up to and above WCB levels. The lump sum payment will add to benefits received from WCB and will not be clawed back.

6) VFIS offers 24-hour coverage to all firefighters. The WCB covers on-the-job and related activities only.

olunteer Fire Fighters

On-duty or 24-hour volunteer fire fighter accident and sickness coverage under VFIS

	Amount	Duration
LOSS OF LIFE BENEFITS:		
accidental death benefit	$100,000	
seat belt benefit	$10,000	
illness loss of life benefit	$100,000	
dependent child benefit	$10,000	
spousal support benefit	$5,000	
memorial benefit	$2,000	
repatriation benefit	$10,000	
LUMP SUM BENEFITS:		
accidental dismemberment benefit principal sum	$100,000	
quadriplegia, paraplegia or hemiplegia (paralysis)	$200,000	
vision impairment benefit	$100,000	
home alteration and vehicle modification	$10,000	
permanent physical impairment principal sum	$100,000	
cosmetic disfigurement (burns) principal sum	$100,000	
HIV positive benefit (100 per cent paid upfront)	$100,000	
WEEKLY INCOME BENEFITS:		
total disability weekly income benefit (first 28 days)	$300	
total disability maximum weekly amount (after 28 days)	$900	260 weeks
total disability minimum weekly amount	$75	260 weeks
partial disability weekly income benefit (first 28 days)	$150	
partial disability maximum weekly amount (after 28 days)	$450	52 weeks
partial disability minimum weekly amount	$38	52 weeks
OCCUPATIONAL RETRAINING		
BENEFIT (MAXIMUM)	$20,000	
MEDICAL EXPENSE BENEFITS:		
medical expense maximum amount	$10,000	
cosmetic/plastic surgery maximum amount	$10,000	
post traumatic stress disorder maximum amount	$10,000	
critical incident stress management max (per covered activity)	$2,500	
family expense benefit (outpatient $50/day inpatient $100/day)	$100	26 weeks
OPTIONAL BENEFITS		
weekly permanent physical impairment benefit maximum	$900	lifetime

Elite Benefit Solutions based in Winnipeg manages VFIS insurance coverage provided to ANA communities. Please contact Mike McAndless at 1-866-925-8273 or e-mail mike.mcandless@eliteben.com with any questions on the coverage and claim process. You may also contact the protective service consultants in your region with any questions regarding mandatory monthly training and attendance records and other eligibility requirements.

New Emergency Toll-Free Number

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) has established a new 24-hour, toll-free emergency number that communities can call in the event of a major emergency.

The new number, **866-735-3111** will put the caller in contact with the ANA duty officer for that week. When you call this number to report an emergency in your community, ANA will be able to help your community put emergency plans into action. The ANA duty officer will also be able to help communities contact other government departments and agencies, if required.

Please use this number when the community emergency plan is being activated and evacuation may be required (ex: forest fire, flooding, severe storms and biohazard accidents). This emergency number must be included with your community emergency plans and should be posted in the council office.

Municipal Calendar Monthly Reminder for October/November

October 2008

deadline for receipt of any property tax payments to dept to avoid penalties

- submit mid-year recreation report

vehicle registration renewals due at month end

Management Maintenance Systems (MMS) lagoons dumped upon approval

THANKSGIVING

- submit quarterly GST refund

Federal Election Day

MMS service snow removal equipment

deadline for receipt of payroll tax deduction payments by Receiver General of Canada to avoid penalty

Community Council elections day

deadline for vehicle registration renewals

- submit second quarter financial statements (July to Sept.)

- submit Municipal Employee Benefits Program (MEBP) form and payment no later than seven working days after the last pay period of month

- if applicable, submit to regional office bi-weekly payrolls for the Building Independence Initiative

- Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Fire Services Conference Day (October 1) in conjunction with Manitoba Emergency Services Conference, October 2-4, 2008 in Brandon

- Recreation Conference for Community Volunteers October 31 to November 2 in Brandon

- council to ensure fire extinguishers inspected monthly, action items highlighted as corrective action from inspections and ensure maintenance of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are in working order

- capital project recommendations prepared for ANA minister's review

November 2008

deadline for receipt of any property tax payments to dept to avoid penalties

- submit updated community inventory reports to regional office

MMS turn on heat trace and recirculating pumps

deadline for receipt of payment to Receiver General to avoid penalty

- needs assessment carried out by both the community and the department

- initiate pre-planning work and obtain applications for Community Places Program (CPP) from Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport (CHTS). Intake deadline is February 15

- submit MEBP form and payment no later than seven working days after the last pay period of month

- if applicable, submit to regional office the bi-weekly payrolls for the Building Independence Initiative

- council to ensure fire extinguishers inspected monthly and action items highlighted as corrective action from inspections

- Are your training records up to date?

- ANA minister announces Capital Approval board recommendations

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Community council members, community residents and departmental staff are strongly encouraged to submit feedback, comments, questions, suggestions and ideas to the editor.